DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 981 CE 066 411

AUTHOR	Burt, Lorna; Lewandowski, Carol
TITLE	Business Writing.
INSTITUTION	Mercer County Community Coll., Trenton, N.J.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. National Workplace Literacy Program.
PUB DATE	94
CONTRACT	VA198A2090
NOTE	142p.; For related documents, see ED 351 578-599 and CE 066 398-418.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; Basic Skills; *Business Correspondence; Business English; *Job Skills; Learning Activities; *Literacy Education; Skill Development; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

This workbook, designed for workplace literacy courses, contains materials for a business writing course. The course presents the fundamentals of effective business letter writing, focusing on logical organization, word choice, style, tone, and clarity. The course uses students' own examples as well as practice exercises for reinforcement. Introductory materials include objectives and a topical outline. The 16 sessions of the course cover the following topics: analyzing an author's purpose, the reader, the style, and the tone; prewriting--brainstorming, organizing, and freewriting; writing clearly and correctly; and editing. The lessons include information sheets and exercises, such as sentence completion, fill-in-the-blanks, and simulations. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 368 981

BUSINESS WRITING

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TRENTON • NEW JERSEY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SKILLS 2000

1999
1998
1997
1996
1995
1994
1993
1992

CE 066 409

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Business Writing

Mercer County Community College
Division of Corporate and Community Programs
1200 Old Trenton Road
Trenton, NJ 08690

Elaine S. Weinberg
Director, Workplace Skills

Prepared under a United States Department of Education
National Workplace Literacy Grant

1994

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mercer County Community College thanks Lorna Burt and Carol Lewandowski, Senior Education Specialists/Curriculum Developers for creating this manual. Through their valuable contributions employees in manufacturing and service industries learned concepts relevant to their existing jobs and strategies for learning other tasks if the opportunity should arise.

BUSINESS WRITING

COURSE OUTLINE

In order to communicate effectively in the modern office, we need to be able to write clearly and persuasively. This course presents the fundamentals of effective business letter writing. We will focus on logical organization, word choice, style, tone and clarity, using students' own examples as well as practice exercises for reinforcement.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- analyze why complicated memos and letters fail to get their message across
- identify the reason for writing
- analyze the reader and what his response should be
- choose appropriate styles and tones
- organize ideas into the most effective order
- apply the principles of good business writing, including grammar, punctuation and mechanics
- edit first drafts
- write clear, precise letters and memos

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- analyzing the author's purpose, the reader, the style and tone
- prewriting - brainstorming, organizing, freewriting
- writing clearly and correctly
- editing

© Mercer County Community College

BUSINESS WRITING ◆ SESSION 1

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write a work related memo or letter, at the end of this session students will be able to

- understand the purpose of writing a memo
- understand the principles of good writing
- analyze why a complicated memo fails to get its message across
- apply the principles of good memo writing to simplify and reorganize a complicated memo
- know why they are writing a particular message
- analyze their reader and what his response should be
- identify and use complete sentences

TOPICS:

- what is the purpose of a memo?
- why does a memo fail to get its message across?
- the principles of good writing
- questions to ask before writing
  - purpose
  - audience
  - bottom line
- sentence types

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work
- practice situations for discussion and writing

© Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 1

EVALUATION:

- pre-class exercise
- correction in class and self evaluation of class exercises

Students will avoid writing complicated sentences and using large words do not enhance their writing. They will write for a specific purpose and be aware of the importance of their audience in order to make their communications more effective. They will also be able to identify and correct sentence problems.

MATERIALS:

- Pre-class exercise
- Ice-breaker game for two-way communication
- Difficult memo
- Principles of Good Writing
- Tips for Effective Communication
- Sentence Types
- Complete Sentences
- Run-Ons

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 1

- Introductions
  Course overview and what we hope to achieve in the next 6 weeks.
  Ice-breaker and pre-class exercise.

- Discussion - what's the purpose of writing a memo/letter?

- Discussion on why complicated memo fails to get its message across.
  Handouts - Difficult Memo
  Principles of Good writing.
  Tips for More Effective Communication

- Groupwork - rewrite memo.

- Each week time will be spent on mechanics, punctuation and grammar.
  Session #1 - sentence structure.

©Mercer County Community College

PRE AND POST CLASS EXERCISES

Part 1

Fix any problems in the sentences below (grammar and punctuation.)

1. The line supervisor, as well as other people on the line, have decided to attend the company picnic this year.

2. In order to complete the job what kind of form do you need to send to pete your supervisor

3. the employees lounge is next to the supervisors lounge so its easy to walk into the wrong one

4. During the meeting the speaker was shrewd clever and controlled consequently the boards decision was to accept his proposal

5. I think that I made less mistakes in this report then I did last time.

©Mercer County Community College

PRE AND POST CLASS EXERCISES

Part 2

MEMO TO PROOFREAD

The memo below contains several grammatical mistakes. Read it carefully, find the errors and rewrite it.

TO: All Employees
FROM: Mary Smith, Human Resources
DATE: February 16, 1993
SUBJECT: Vacation Requests

Requests for vacation dates is now being accepted. Each employee must complete the appropriate form and have it approved by their supervisor. These forms must be signed by both the employee and the supervisor, and be sure to submit two copies.

Its important to get these in early, because it will effect whom will be given first priority in their requests.

Thanking you for your cooperation.

©Mercer County Community College

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS MEMO?

COMPANY NAME

Memorandum

TO: All Employees

FROM: Health and Safety Committee

SUBJECT: Important Information regarding Chemical XYZ

The Toxic Substances Control Act imposes certain duties on persons who manufacture, process or distribute chemical substances and mixtures. Sect 8(e) of the Act is as follows:

"Notice to Administrator of Substantial Risk. - Any person who manufactures, processes or distributes in commerce a chemical substance or mixture and who obtains information which reasonably supports the conclusion that such substance or mixture presents a substantial risk of injury to health or the environment shall immediately inform the Administrator of such information unless such person has actual knowledge that the Administrator has been adequately informed of such information."

It has come to our attention that the repackaging materials used with certain genres of petroleum based compounds may cause subsequent volatile reactive processes in molecular structure of same. Affirmative action must be taken to determine the precise composition of the receptacle, so that combustion does not occur. In the interim, please refrain from use.

©Mercer County Community College

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD WRITING

1.

Know why you are writing. What do you hope to accomplish by writing? What do you want the reader to think, feel say or do as a result of reading your communication?

2.

Write the way you speak. Though written English is usually more formal than spoken, use standard, straightforward language. Don't make anything more complicated than it needs to be. Fancy vocabulary more often than not creates problems.

3.

Write for your reader, not for yourself. Involve your reader in your communication.

4.

Be positive and, wherever possible, look upon situations optimistically.

5.

Be certain your writing is clear, concise, accessible, complete and accurate, correct and organized.

©Mercer County Community College

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Keep your writing clear, concise and simple.
- Choose your words carefully.
- Be natural.
- Avoid fad words, jargon, and clichés.
- Use the active rather than the passive voice.
- Be committed to what you say. Avoid qualifiers.
- Use familiar words.
- Be specific. Avoid vagueness.
- Eliminate redundant expressions.
- Keep your audience in mind.

©Mercer County Community College

SENTENCE TYPES

1. **Simple Sentence:**
   -contains a subject and verb
   -expresses a complete thought
   -considered a single independent clause

   Examples:

   He came to work at 8:00.

   They brought the materials to the tables.

2. **Compound Sentence**
   -contains two independent clauses joined by a FANBOY (for/and/nor/but/or/yet/so)
   -expresses a complete thought

   Examples:

   He came to work at 8:00, but he didn't start working until 8:30.

   They brought the materials to the table so they could collate the binders.

3. **Complex Sentence**
   -contains a main clause (independent clause)
   -contains a subordinate clause (identifiable by a word or an expression whose completion relies on the main clause: since, because, although, even though, before, after, while, during)
   -expresses a complete thought

   Examples:

   Even though he had no time, he volunteered to reorganize the shelves.

   Since they took on the account, they have received many inquiries.

   She packed the materials after she picked them from the shelves.

©Mercer County Community College

COMPLETE SENTENCES

A **complete sentence** must have the following:

1. subject
2. verb
3. complete thought

Also, the sentence must start with a **capital letter** and end with a **period**.

Look at the sentences below and say whether they are **complete** sentences. If they are not, make them complete.

1. Because the company is closed for the holiday.

2. Hoping to return.

3. the old machine, a large and noisy printer, not at all like the one we bought last year.

4. In the cafeteria, next to the vending machines there are new tables

©Mercer County Community College

COMPLETE SENTENCES

5. Have to be cleaned everyday.

6. When I returned to work after my operation, having been in the hospital for nearly a full week.

7. Even though he forgot to keep track of his hours.

8. Before I came to work here, I worked in many different jobs.

9. For example, machine operator, fast-food worker, and checkout clerk.

10. However, like this job best.

©Mercer County Community College

RUN-ONS

Three ways to fix a run-on:

1. Make it into two separate sentences by adding a period and a capital letter.

2. Make it into a compound sentence by adding a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

3. Make it into a complex sentence by adding a subordinating conjunction (because, when, before, while since, etc.)

Find and correct the run-ons in the sentences below, using a combination of the three methods.

1. Employees should notify the human resources department they plan to take vacation time.

2. You must tidy your work station after each job you must also tidy it at the end of the day.

3. Assemblers must wear heavy work shoes these shoes must conform to company safety standards.

4. Some machinery is very noisy some people prefer to wear ear plugs.

5. Most benefit books are very boring to read and difficult to understand people don't bother to read them.

6. Some people like to listen to music when they work others prefer to work in silence.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 2

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write a work related memo or letter, at the end of this session students will be able to

- know why they are writing a particular message
- analyze their reader and what his response should be
- identify the most important idea that the message must get across
- write a coherent, well constructed paragraph

TOPICS:

- questions to ask before writing
  - purpose
  - audience
  - bottom line
- main ideas and supporting details
- paragraphs

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work
- practice situations for discussion and writing

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 2

EVALUATION:

- pre-class exercise
- correction in class and self evaluation of class exercises

Students will know what the purpose of their writing is and be aware of the importance of their audience. They will be able to write clear paragraphs, identifying, main ideas and supporting details. This will make their writing more effective.

MATERIALS:

- Audience-and-Use Profile Sheet
- Main Idea and Supporting Details
- Worksheets on paragraphs

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 2

- Discussion - first step to writing -

    1. PURPOSE:
       why am I writing this?
       what do I want my reader to do?

    2. AUDIENCE:
       who is my reader?
       what is he/she?
       what does he/she know about the subject?
       how will he/she react and use this document?
       is there anyone else who should read this?

    3. BOTTOM LINE:
       if the reader were to forget everything else, what is the one idea I want to get across?

- Use Audience-and-Use Profile Sheet in preparation for writing three very different memos. (These will be submitted, with 2 more at end of course.)

    1. Customer complaint

    2. Letter to co-worker/s

    3. Letter to supervisor/union rep. about disciplinary matter

- Give students example of well constructed paragraph. Discuss main ideas/ support. Then have students generate their own paragraphs.

©Mercer County Community College

AUDIENCE-AND-USE PROFILE SHEET

Audience Identity and Needs

Primary audience:__
(name, title)

Other potential reader(s):_____

Relationship:_____
(e.g. client, employer)

Intended use of document:_____
(e.g. take action, solve a problem)

Prior knowledge about this topic:_____

Additional information needed:_____

Probable questions:_____?

_____?

_____?

©Mercer County Community College

AUDIENCE-AND-USE PROFILE SHEET

Audience's Probable Attitude and Personality

Attitude toward topic:_____
(skeptical, indifferent)

Probable objections:_____
(cost, time, none)

Probable attitude toward writer:_____
(intimidated, hostile, receptive)

Organizational climate:_____
(receptive, repressive, creative)

Persons most affected by document:_____

Temperament:_____
(cautious, impatient)

Probable reaction to document:_____
(resistance, approval, anger, guilt)

Risk of alienating anyone:_____

©Mercer County Community College

AUDIENCE-AND-USE PROFILE SHEET

Audience Expectations about the Document

Reason document originated:_____
(audience request, my idea)

Acceptable length:_____

Material important to this audience:_____
(interpretations, costs, conclusions)

Most useful arrangement:_____
(problem-causes-solutions)

Tone:_____
(businesslike, apologetic, enthusiastic)

Intended effect on audience:_____
(win support, change behavior)

©Mercer County Community College

MAIN IDEAS AND SUPPORTING DETAILS

Subject

The subject is what you are writing about. You want to make a point about this topic.

Main Idea

The main idea is the main point that you want to make about the subject. It is the one thing you want your audience to remember. You can have more than one main point in your letter or memo.

Supporting Details

The supporting details are the examples and details that you use to prove your main idea. They tell your audience why you make your main idea statement.

Action

This is what you want your audience to do as a result of reading your letter/memo, or what you intend to do.

©Mercer County Community College

PARAGRAPHS

A **paragraph** has several parts:

Introduction

This is the first sentence of the paragraph. It tells you what the paragraph will be about (subject) and the author's point (main idea).

Body

This is made up of the middle sentences of the paragraph. It is the support that the author gives for his main idea. The support can take many forms: examples, a process, a story, or a definition.

Conclusion

This is the last sentence of the paragraph. It can be a restatement of the introduction, or it can be a comment on the main idea.

©Mercer County Community College

PARAGRAPHS

Read the paragraph below and identify the main idea, body and conclusion. Then write a well-constructed paragraph of your own.

In the past there was no guarantee that workers would be told about the chemical hazards they might face on the job. Container labels and warning sheets, even when they were provided, didn't always give enough information on potential hazards, what to do in an emergency, or where to turn for help. That is why the Federal Government decided to set a uniform hazard communication standard. Now everyone knows what information has to be provided to keep you safe.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 3

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write memos and letters on work related subjects, at the end of this session students will be able to:

- choose when to use memos and when to use letters
- set out memos and letters correctly
- use transitions to make their writing read more smoothly
- identify and use irregular verbs

TOPICS:

- when to use memos and when to use letters
- memo and letter format
- transitions
- irregular verbs

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work
- practice situations for discussion and writing

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 3

EVALUATION:

- self evaluation based on correct completion of worksheets

Students will know when letters or memos are appropriate. They will use transitions regularly, making their writing flow more smoothly. They will write more correctly, using correct forms of irregular verbs. All this adds to getting their messages across clearly.

MATERIALS:

- Better Memo Writing
- Typical Memorandum Reports
- A Checklist for the Business Letter
- How to Structure a Business Letter
- Transitions
- Worksheets on irregular verbs

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 3

- Discussion on when to use **memos** and when to use **letters.**

- **Setting out memos:**
  1. To:
  2. From:
  3. Date:
  4. Subject:
  5. no signature - most writers initial beside name

- **Setting out letters:**
  1. date line (preceded by writer's address if no letterhead used)
  2. address
  3. attention line (optional)
  4. salutation
  5. subject line (optional)
  6. message
  7. positive/complimentary closing
  8. company name (optional)
  9. author's name and title
  10. reference initials
  11. enclosure or attachment notation (when appropriate)
  12. copy notation (when appropriate)

- Handouts on how to set out letters/memos are for student information and to generate class discussion. Find examples of company letters and memos to use in class.

- **Transitions** - worksheet to be completed by students

- **irregular verbs** - worksheets to be completed by students

©Mercer County Community College

BETTER MEMO WRITING

1. **Get to the point quickly** - the reader already knows the purpose of the memo because of the subject line.

2. Be **interesting, conversational, natural.**

3. Highlight **key ideas**, using bullets, underlining or bold.

4. **Keep it short** - under 1 page and use short sentences, generally.

5. Write in the **order events happen**.

6. Be **specific, clear, concise** and **economical.**

7. Keep your **audience in mind.**

8. Keep it **simple.**

©Mercer County Community College

STANDARD MEMO FORMAT

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

TO: Name, Title

FROM: Name, Title, Initials

DATE:

SUBJECT: CLEARLY TITLED IN FULL CAPS

Introductory paragraph

Body paragraph

Concluding paragraph

©Mercer County Community College

CHECKLIST FOR THE BUSINESS LETTER

- Tell what your letter is about in the **first** paragraph
- If you are replying to a letter, refer to the date it was written
- Write the way you speak; **be natural**
- **Be specific**
- Use the **active voice** rather than the passive
- Don't ramble on; **keep the letter short**
- **Underline, bold** or **italicize key words** for emphasis
- Don't pass off opinions as facts
- In your **final** paragraph, tell your reader exactly what you want him/her to do, or what you are going to do.
- **Edit** your first draft ruthlessly
- **Proofread** thoroughly

©Mercer County Community College

HOW TO STRUCTURE A BUSINESS LETTER

INTRODUCTION

Opening statements
Sentence 1 - states *reason* for writing
Sentence 2 - states *1st. major* idea
Sentence 3 - states *next major* idea
Sentence 4 - states *next major* idea

Transition statement to get from **introduction** to **body**

BODY

Take **1st. major** idea - *explain, support, conclude*
Transition
Take **next major** idea - *explain, support, conclude*
Transition
Take **next major** idea - *explain, support, conclude*

Transition statement to get from **body** to **conclusion**

CONCLUSION

Summary
Closing statement

©Mercer County Community College

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONS are words or phrases that show the relationship between one statement and another or one paragraph and another. They make your writing read more smoothly.

TO EXPLAIN - for instance, for example, to illustrate, also, that is, too, namely

TO CONTRAST - however, nevertheless, yet, but, on the other hand, on the contrary, otherwise, in contrast, in spite of, instead

TO ADD - in addition, furthermore, similarly, besides, moreover, a second another....., again

TO SHOW REPETITION - in other words, as I have said, that is, as has been stated

TO SHOW ORDER - first, second, third, finally, in conclusion

TO SHOW RESULT - therefore, as a result, consequently, for this reason, accordingly, in conclusion

TO EMPHASIZE - in fact, indeed, in any event, naturally

TO CONCEDE A POINT - fortunately, of course, in fact, naturally

©Mercer County Community College

TRANSITIONS

Connect the following sentences using transitions, so that they read more smoothly.

1. Maria works in the cafeteria. She never eats her meals there.

2. There was a very heavy snow storm. Many people were late for work.

3. The company manufactures heating and air-conditioning units. Its sales are directly related to the weather.

4. We need to update our computer system. We need to train our data processing department in the latest equipment.

5. Mike is very good with people. He has been elected to represent his co-workers at the interdepartmental meeting.

©Mercer County Community College

IRREGULAR VERBS

Principle Parts

Present tense e.g. - I go, I see, I eat
Past tense e.g. - I went, I saw, I ate
Past participle
(always preceded by the helping verb **have, has** or **had**)
e.g. - I have gone, I have seen, I had eaten

VERB QUIZ

Fill in the chart below:

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
1. eat		
2.	knew	
3.		spoken
4. go		
5.	swore	
6.		hidden
7. become		
8.	gave	
9.		stolen
10. fly		

©Mercer County Community College

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
11.	saw	
12.		frozen
13. run		
14.	sang	
15.		gotten
16. draw		
17.	was/were	
18.		fallen
19. bear		
20.	took	
21.		broken
22. choose		
23.	swam	
24.		blown
25. ride		
26.	told	
27.		brought
28. feel		
29.	lay	

©Mercer County Community College

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
30.		shaken
31. write		
32.	grew	
33.		begun
34. cut		
35.	did	
36.		driven
37. light		
38.	paid	
39.		sunk
40. stand		

©Mercer County Community College

IRREGULAR VERBS

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
am, be	was	been
bear	bore	born,borne
beat	beat	beat,beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
creep	crept	crept
cry	cried	cried
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dived,dove	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
dry	dried	dried
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt

©Mercer County Community College

IRREGULAR VERBS

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
fry	fried	fried
get	got	got,gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang(person)	hanged	hanged
hang(thing)	hung	hung
has,have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hurt	hurt	hurt
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lie	lay	lain
lie	lied	lied
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run

©Mercer County Community College

IRREGULAR VERBS

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
see	saw	seen
shake	shook	shaken
shine(polish)	shined	shined
shine(light)	shone	shone
show	showed	shown
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
sting	stung	stung
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
try	tried	tried
wake	woke,waked	woken,waked
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

©Mercer County Community College

USING IRREGULAR VERBS

In the paragraphs below, write in the correct form of the verb in the space provided.

The supervisor considered which of the two assemblers he should use. John (can)_____ work on his own whenever he was (give)_____ the opportunity. Ann (be)_____ with the company for ten years, and (be) _____therefore more eligible because of seniority. He (think)_____ he (will)_____consider the matter further.

Each (come)_____ with his own advantages and disadvantages. John, for example, (has)_____ a series of unexplained absences last spring when he (say)_____ one thing to his supervisor and (tell)_____ his co-workers something else. However, he (show)_____ that he (know)_____ the meaning of hard work when he (meet) _____ the deadlines during the pre-Christmas rush.

©Mercer County Community College

Ann, on the other hand, (have) _____ different good and bad points. She (be)_____ extremely loyal and (driven)_____ to the airport on several occasions and (write) _____letters on his behalf when he (go)_____ for his promotion last year. Unfortunately, she (can) _____ not work well on her own and always (spend)_____ to much time asking for his help and advice.

He (come)_____ to the conclusion that the only solution (be)_____ to toss a coin.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 4 & 5

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write memos and letters on work related subjects, at the end of this session students will be able to:

- distinguish different tones and styles for different audiences
- apply spelling rules
- use frequently confused words correctly

TOPICS:

- style and tone
- spelling and vocabulary

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work
- practice situations for discussion and writing

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 4 & 5

EVALUATION:

- self evaluation based on correct completion of worksheets

Students will be able to use different styles and tones, according to different situations and will therefore be more effective communicators. Their spelling will improve when they apply the spelling rules and they will be able to distinguish and use frequently confused words correctly.

MATERIALS:

- Tips for Setting out your Letter
- Style and Tone
- Memos for Discussion
- List of Commonly Misspelled Words
- Spelling Rules
- Spelling Exercises
- Frequently Confused Words

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 4 & 5

- It will depend on the group as to how best to work through these two sessions. I suggest that you spend the first hour on tone and style and the second on spelling for each of the two sessions.

- Discussion on Tips for Setting Out Your Letter. Link to examples genrated by the class.

- **Style** and **Tone.** This is a lengthy handout and should not be read to the group. Give examples and generate discussion and let the students read the information themselves.

- **Group work** - discuss and rewrite memos on Flextime

- **Spelling** and **vocabulary.** Students work through this series of handouts and worksheets. Time should be spent focusing in on individual needs and problems. Dictionaries should be used, particularly with Frequently Confused Words. Remember this should not be a testing situation for the students. No one should be made to feel that they are stupid etc.

©Mercer County Community College

TIPS FOR SETTING OUT YOUR LETTER

When reader's reaction is positive or neutral and you aren't asking for any action -

- give good news first. Summarize main points in 1st paragraph.
- in body, give supporting details, negative aspects and benefits.
- make last paragraph personal and positive.

When you have bad news -

- open with a neutral statement.
- give the reason for the news before the bad news itself.
- be clear and concise.
- try to give a n alternative or compromise.
- try to end positively.

When you want the reader to do something -

- catch the reader's interest.
- define the problem.
- explain the solution.
- show that any objections are outweighed by the benefits
- tell the reader exactly what you want him to do.

©Mercer County Community College

STYLE AND TONE

What you say in a memo or letter is partly **how** you say it.

Your message can get lost in your words. The whole message is more than understanding the dictionary definitions of the words you use.

Writing effectively conveys how you wish to relate to your audience and what you want your audience to feel in response.

You must choose what style is appropriate for the occasion. Should you be personal or impersonal, simple and direct or more complex and colorful, forceful or passive?

To be an effective communicator **remember:**

1. Your style has an impact on your reader
2. Style communicates almost as much as the content of a message
3. Style cannot be isolated from a situation
4. There is no general style to fit all situations

For a forceful style - appropriate where the writer has power to give orders or to say no, firmly but politely to a subordinate.

- use the active voice
- don't beat around the bush. Say it directly.
- Write most sentences in subject-verb-object order. Don't weaken sentences by relegating the action to a subordinate clause: " Mike was offered the job, although the competition was intense," not "Although Mike was offered the job, the competition was intense."
- be confident. Avoid words like possibly, maybe, perhaps, some might conclude that

©Mercer County Community College

STYLE AND TONE

For a passive style - appropriate in negative situations and where the writer is subordinate to the reader.

- avoid the imperative
- occasional use of the passive: "Valuable time is being wasted" instead of "You are wasting valuable time."
- use words like possibly, maybe, perhaps, some might conclude that

For a personal style - appropriate in good news and persuasive action/request situations.

- use the active voice
- use personal pronouns (particularly you and I) and people's names, instead of titles
- uses short sentences that give the rhythm of ordinary conversation
- direct questions to the reader
- add positive personal thoughts and references to reinforce that this is not some type of form letter, sent to lots of others

For an impersonal style - appropriate in negative and information conveying situations. (Also in technical and scientific writing)

- avoid using people's names and personal pronouns
- use the passive voice
- make some of your sentences complex and some paragraphs long.

©Mercer County Community College

STYLE AND TONE

For a colorful style - appropriate for the more persuasive writing of sales and advertising letters.

- use adjectives and adverbs
- if appropriate, use metaphors - our new product is a miracle of modern design; or similes - our new cleaner works like magic to remove stains

There can be some overlap in these styles. This is a guide to help you, but, in the end, it is up to you to decide how you say what you want to say.

©Mercer County Community College

MEMOS FOR DISCUSSION

Company ABC has a policy of flextime. Below are a selection of letters written by the Manager of Human Resources telling all employees about the program. Discuss how each meets the needs of the reader and the organization. Is the message clear, complete and concise?

1.

To: All Employees
From: Manager, Human Resources
Subject: Now you can come and go when you want!

Great news! As from Monday, March 1, you get to choose your own hours! Well, not any hours, but as long as you're here from 10 to 3, the rest is up to you.

This will make life easier for you moms and dads. We all know what a pain it is trying to juggle home and work. And those without kids won't mind the extra flexibility to catch up on time in the gym. It will be good to get on the machines without having to wait.

Just work it out with your supervisor. Someone has to be around from 9 to 5. We don't want the customers thinking there's nobody here when they phone! Enjoy!

2.

To: All Employees
From: Manager, Human Resources
Subject: Flextime

Following the Executive Board meeting on February 3, 1993, in accordance with company policy regarding changes to procedures, it is announced that from Monday, March 1, 1993, The ABC Company will be initiating a system of flextime. Attendance between the hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. will be regarded as obligatory. However employees will have the option of choosing their own hours of commencement and departure, subject to their supervisor's approval and providing they are present for the mandatory eight hours. The other stipulation is that personnel are present at all times in order to facilitate the answering of telephones.

©Mercer County Community College

3.

To: All Employees
From: Manager, Human Resources
Subject: Another Employee Benefit for Employees who work here at the ABC Company

Some of you may already have got wind of the new policy that we are about to initiate at the ABC Company. We are really excited about it and know that once you get used to the new system, you too will be as enthusiastic as we are. However there are some organizational details that you need to be aware of.
Things will get under way on March 1, 1993. At that time you will be able to be more flexible about you start and finish times. You have to be at work between the core hours of 10 a.m.and 3 p.m. and then have to put in the extra 3 hours to make the 8 hour work day. This means that, for example, you could come in at 6 a.m. and then leave by 3 p.m. Or, if you wanted to come in at 9.30 a.m. it would mean that you could only leave at 5.30 p.m. You will be able to work out whatever suits you best. You can even come in at different times on different days, so long as you have your supervisor's permission.
As I have just said, you do need to get your supervisor's permission. This is obvious, because otherwise it might mean that on some days and at some times, there might not be anybody to answer the telephones. You all know that customers are the lifeblood of our company, so we must have somebody here at all times.
I do see that there might be a few problems with this to start out, but I am confident that we can work it out. I hope that you think that this is a good idea and that it gives you more time to spend with your families or catching up with those things that we never get time to do in a normal work week.

Now **rewrite** this memo.

©Mercer County Community College

COMMONLY MISSPELLED WORDS

absenCE
aCCept
aCComplish
aCCurate
achIEvement
acquaintANCE
aCRoss
advetTISEment
adVICE/VISE
A LOT
anSWer
aPPropriate
arGUMent
artICLE
aTHLete
attenDANCE
availABLE
bEAUtiful
begiNNing
behaVIOR
breaTH/THE
BUSIness
calENDAR
cEIling
cerTAINly
chIEf
choiCe
chOOse/chOse
coMMerCial
coMMiTTEE
compETItion
conCentrate
congRATulate
conSCIENCE
conSCIOUS
consEquently
convenIEnce
counSelor
critiCISM/CIZE
deFINITEly
desPERate/ly
DEScribe
deveLOP
diFFERent/ence
diSAPPoint
DISease
doESN'T
duRing
eiGHTH
embaRRaSS
enTRANCE
enveLOPE
enviRONMent
eSPECIALly
exaGGerate
eXCept
exisTENCE
exPERIEnce
exPERIment
exPLANation
exTREMEly
familIAR
faSCinate
FeBRUAry
forEIGN
genIUS
goVERNMent
gramMAR
gUArANtee
hEIGHT
iMMediate
importANT
indepenDENCE
inTEGration
inTELLectual
intERest/ing
inTERfere
inteRRupt
IRRELevant
JUDGment
JEWELry
knowLEDGE
laBORATory
LEIsure
lenGTH
liCenSe
lonEliness
lOOse/lOse
mainTENance
maTHEmatics
misCHIEF
miSSpell
nIEce
ninEty
ninTH
oCCaSion
oCCuRRence
opINion
oPPortunity
oRIGinal
oPTImist
partiCULAR
PAStime
PERform
PERhaps
phoNY
phySICal
poSSeSS
poSSible
preFER
preJUDiCED
preVALENT
priviLEGE
proBABly
proNUNciation
PSYchology
PURsue
quIET/quITE
realIZE
reCOMMend
RHyTHM
rIdicULOUS
scenERy
SCHedule
SECRETary
sePARate/ly
siMILar
siNCe
sinCEREly
spEEch
straiGHT
strenGTH
sUCCeed/sUCCess
SURpriSE
temPERature
thROUGH
thoROUGH
ThurSday
toMoRRow
unNECESSary
UNusUAlly
WedNESday

©Mercer County Community College

PLURAL FORMS OF NOUNS

To make most nouns plural, add **-s.**
chairs, tables, dogs, cats

Add **-es** to nouns ending in **-sh, -ch, -ss,** and **-x.**
dishes, matches, dresses, boxes

If a noun ends in a **consonant + -y,** change the **y** to **i** and add **-es.**
ladies, babies, secretaries

If a noun ends in **-fe** or **-f,** change the ending to **-ves.**
knives, shelves, wives, halves (Except: beliefs, chiefs, roofs, cuffs)

Some nouns that end in **-o** just take **-s** in the plural.
zoos, radios, studios, photos, pianos, autos, solos

Some nouns that end in **-o** take **-es** in the plural.
potatoes, tomatoes, echoes, heroes, mosquitoes

Some can take either **-s** or **-es.**
zeroes/zeros, volcanoes/volcanos, tornadoes/tornados

Some nouns have **irregular** plural forms.
children, men, women, people, feet, teeth, mice, geese

Some plurals are the same as the singular.
deer, fish, sheep, species, offspring

Plurals that come from Latin and Greek.

bacterium -	bacteria	basis - bases cactus - cacti
crisis - crises	criterion - criteria	hypothesis - hypotheses
phenomenon -	phenomena	

©Mercer County Community College

PLURAL FORMS OF NOUNS

The sentences below are written in the **singular**. Make the necessary corrections to make them **plural.**

1. The man on the line worked on in spite of the crisis.

2. The person put up the shelf while he ate his sandwich with tomato.

3. The fire chief confirmed his belief that a match could have started the fire.

4. The secretary typed up the list to show the students who were in the class.

5. A hero is a phenomenon of the past. Today, a boy doesn't have the same role model that he used to.

©Mercer County Community College

NOUNS - USEFUL TIPS

Singular nouns that end in s

athletics
economics. mathematics, physics
news
politics
the United States

Nouns that are always plural

clothes
glasses
jeans, pants, shorts, slacks, trousers
scissors
police

Collective nouns are singular when they refer to a group acting as one

audience	band	class
club	collection	committee
crowd	faculty	family
group	jury	orchestra
public	staff	team

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING RULES

1. **i** before **e**, except after **c**, if the sound of the 2 letters combined is "**ee**":

   mischief receive

   i before **e** if the sound of the 2 letters combined is "**ee**". If not, the pattern is reversed :

   foreign

Exceptions: either, neither, seize, leizure, weird, sheik

2. If a word ends in "**y**" and the "**y**" comes after a **consonant**, change the **y** to **i** before adding more to the word:

enemy	enemies	
secretary	secretaries	
try	tries	tried
study	studies	studied
lonely	loneliness	

But when you add "**ing**" you keep the "**y**":

try	trying
study	studying

If the "**y**" comes after a **vowel**, you do not change it to "**i**":

holiday	holidays	
display	displays	displayed
employ	employment	
pay	payment	

Exceptions:	day	daily
	pay	paid
	lay	laid

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING RULES

3. Drop the final silent **e** when adding an ending that begins with a vowel:

accuse	accusing
dispute	disputing

Keep the final silent **e** when adding an ending that begins with a **consonant**:

hope	hopeless
spite	spiteful

Exceptions:

judgment	courageous
dyeing	argument
truly	

4. **Double** the final consonant, when adding an ending, when the vowel sound says its sound:

sum	summary
trim	trimming
program	programming

Usually, in words of more than one syllable, when the accent is on the **1st**. syllable, **do not double** the consonant:

layer	layering
offer	offered
cancel	canceled

Usually, in words of more than one syllable, when the accent is on the **2nd**. syllable, **double** the consonant:

occur	occurring
refer	referred
prefer	preferred
remit	remittance
omit	omitted

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING RULES

Do not double the final consonant, when adding an ending when the vowel sound says its own name:

time	timing
rage	raging
cope	coping

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING REVIEW

Complete the word in parentheses.

1. We hope to (**rec** _____ **ve**) payment for the work by th end of the week.

2. We avoided an (**arg** _____ **ment**) when we held a meeting to change our working (**env** _____ **ment**).

3. The hinges on the door are (**l** _____**se**) and need to be tightened.

4. I did not (**bel** _____ **ve**) the (**h**_____ **ght**) of the new basketball player.

5. In my (**jud** _____ **ment**) the (**go** _____ **ent**) will spend more on training next year.

6. I will send that letter (**sep** _____ **ly**) and would appreciate your answer (**im** _____ **d** _____ **ly**).

©Mercer County Community College

FREQUENTLY CONFUSED WORDS

Fill in the blank in each sentence by selecting the word you think most appropriate from the words in parentheses.

1. Don't let my opinion _____ your decision.
   (*effect, affect*)

2. The _____ of the new price increases will be that fewer people will be able to afford the product.
   (effect, affect)

3. It becomes a matter of _____ that we offer products at affordable prices.
   (principal, principle)

4. After working in sales for a year, she decided that she was _____ in it.
   (disinterested, uninterested)

5. Let me _____ an example to illustrate the point.
   (cite, site, sight)

6. The _____ is an important part of this program.
   (*councilor, counselor)*

7. Do you mean to _____ that I am not telling the truth? (*infer, imply)*

©Mercer County Community College

FREQUENTLY CONFUSED WORDS

8. From what you have said, I have reason to _____ it.
(infer, imply)

9. Nothing that happened after the meeting could _____ from the initial excitement we all felt.
(detract, distract)

10. He received many _____ for the presentation he gave on the importance of good customer relations.
(complements, compliments)

11. When we arrived, the others were _____ to go.
(all ready, already)

12. I make _____ mistakes in punctuation than I did before I took this course.
(less, fewer)

13. In order to relax, you must _____ deeply.
(breath, breathe)

14. The new rule, _____ antagonizing the employees, will be difficult to administer.
(beside, besides)

15. Writing letters is another good _____ of communication for this purpose.
(median, medium)

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING EXERCISE

Circle the correctly spelled word in each pair.

1. defendant
   defendent

2. interfered
   interferred

3. paralell
   parallel

4. precede
   preceed

5. bookkeeper
   bookeeper

6 independent
  independant

7. catagory
   category

8. neccessary
   necessary

9. desperately
   desparately

10. liaison
    liason

11. dissapoint
    disappoint

12. refered
    referred

13. temparature
    temperature

14. lisence
    license

15. accessible
    accessable

16. developement
    development

17. Febuary
    February

18. benefited
    benefitted

19. chargable
    chargeable

20. guarentee
    guarantee

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING EXERCISE

Find the spelling errors in the letter below. Then rewrite it correctly.

Dear Madame:

Thank you for your courteous letter requesting information about our latest product. You are apparantly extremly knowledgable about the subject and we would reccomend that you become part of our destinguished clientel. We have submited a questionaire that is necessary for you to complete before we can acommodate you into our programme. We suggest that you fill in the relavant sections and send it to us at your liesure. Then we will implement our part of the baragin.

You will find our product extrordinary. Congradulations once again, and welcome. We sincerly beleive that you will be delighted with the results.

Yours truely,

The Managment, ABC Products.

©Mercer County Community College

SPELLING EXERCISE

Read the memo below and find the spelling errors. Then rewrite it correctly.

TO: John Brown
FROM: Mary Black
DATE: April 5, 1993

SUBJECT: Reccognition of your Personel Acheivements.

At a recent meeting of the Eviroment Comittee, the concensus of the group was that you should recieve the Acheivement award for your unparalelled work to impliment changes in the way we get rid of exess waste. This was expecially pleasing for me, as I have had the priviledge of working with you over a long period of time.

The award will be presented at a seperate meeting held in your honour. I will let you know the time, date and venue very soon.

Congradulations!

©Mercer County Community College

WORD USAGE

Look at the words paired below and , by using them in sentences, make sure you can distinguish between them.

1. accept
   except
2. access
   excess
3. adapt
   adept
4. advice
   advise
5. aide
   aid
6. ascent
   assent
7. coarse
   course
8. desert
   dessert
9. farther
   further
10. loose
    lose
11. moral
    morale
12. quiet
    quite
13. continual
    continuous
14. stationery
    stationary
15. incite
    insight
16. disburse
    disperse
17. cooperation
    corporation
18. eminent
    imminent
19. allowed
    aloud
20. berth
    birth

©Mercer County Community College

WORD USAGE

Make sure you know the difference between the following:

1. already
   all ready
2. anyone
   any one
3. beside
   besides
4. everyday
   every day
5. less
   fewer
6. their
   there
7. who's
   whose
8. your
   you're
9. among
   between
10. I
    me

©Mercer County Community College

WORD USAGE EXERCISE

Read the letter below. Then rewrite it, correcting any mistakes.

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for you're letter inquiring about the job we had advertized in last week's newspaper. Unfortunately, the position has all ready been taken. However, I advice you to keep in contact with our cooperation. Everyday things change and I can site you many examples of situations when people, who's circumstances change, leave suddenly.

We complement you on your qualifications, and hope that we have farther dealings with you.

Yours sincerely,

U.R. Amoron.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 6

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write effective memos and letters, at the end of this session students will be able to:

- brainstorm
- organize their ideas into the most effective order
- reorganize a memo for visual impact

TOPICS:

- brainstorming
- organizing ideas
- the importance of visual impact

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work applying principles
- writing

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 6

EVALUATION:

- self evaluation, based on correct completion of worksheets

Students will be better able to generate their own ideas, by applying the brainstorming techniques. They will also be able to organize these ideas, put them down on paper and reorganize them for visual impact.

MATERIALS:

- The Brainstorm Outline
- The Importance of Visual Impact and exercise

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 6

Discussion on **brainstorming** - tends to be useful for **longer** memos, letters and reports.

1. Regular jotting down of ideas
2. Picture Outline
   - nonlinear, pictorial way of getting ideas and their relationship to each other on paper
   - encourages free association of ideas
   - space to squeeze in new ideas
   - visual grouping of ideas
   - put related ideas on same spoke or close to it
   - less important facts stem out of more important ones

Brainstorm using both methods (either 2 of 3 original memos or new ones)

Organizing ideas:

- what order will be most effective?
- can any details be combined?
- look at what general topics emerge
- will these be separate headings/paragraphs?

Visual Impact and exercise.

©Mercer County Community College

BRAINSTORM OUTLINE

©Mercer County Community College

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL IMPACT

USE:

- **Short paragraphs**

  Paragraphs have **three** purposes:
  - to develop the single idea presented in the topic sentence or subject line
  - to provide a logical break in material
  - to create physical breaks that help the reader visually

  Paragraphs should be short - 5-6 lines.

- **Headlines**

  Headlines focus your reader on major ideas

- **Highlighting**

  Use bold, italics, capitals to focus your reader on important information

- **Bullets**

  For impact, use bullets to replace lists within sentences

©Mercer County Community College

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL IMPACT

Using some of the above techniques, **rewrite** the following memo, so that you improve its **visual impact.**

TO: All personnel
FROM: Mary Smith, company nurse
DATE: March 6, 1993
SUBJECT: Safety dress code

Following observations by the Safety Committee during routine safety inspections throughout the plant, we have decided that this facility requires all employees to follow a safety dress code in order to minimize injury on the shop floor. The safety code requires that all employees dress in the following manner: Upper garment will cover the upper body from the collar bones to at least the waistline and from shoulder point to shoulder point. Lower garment will cover the lower body from the waist to below the knee. The following types of shoes are not allowed in the shop area: open-toed shoes, sandals, canvas shoes, high-heeled shoes, any type of sneaker. The new rules will be in operation from Monday, March 8, 1993. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to enforce this. If you choose to ignore this policy, you will face disciplinary action.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 7 & 8

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write effective memos and letters, at the end of this session students will be able to:

- freewrite
- write a first draft
- punctuate correctly, using commas, semicolons, colons and apostrophes

TOPICS:

- freewriting
- writing a first draft
- punctuation

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- group work applying principles
- writing

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 7 & 8

EVALUATION:

- self evaluation, based on correct completion of worksheets

Students will be better able to generate their own ideas, by applying the brainstorming techniques. They will also be able to organize these ideas, put them down on paper and reorganize them for visual impact. In addition, by mastering all the punctuation exercises, students will write more correctly and therefore their writing will be more effective.

MATERIALS:

- Worksheets on:
  - commas
  - colons
  - semicolons
  - apostrophes
- Punctuation review

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 7 & 8

Freewriting:

Students will spend these sessions writing their first drafts of their memos. They will use the original three , using information from Sess.2

customer complaint
letter to co-worker
letter about a grievance/disciplinary procedure

and/or the two subjects they brainstormed on from Sess.6

- write from beginning to end. If a good beginning doesn't emerge, go onto next idea.
- let your thoughts flow. Don't worry about mechanics. That comes with editing.
- change nothing as you write.

Punctuation handouts and worksheets.

©Mercer County Community College

COMMAS

1. Use a **comma** in a **compound** sentence between the **2 independent clauses** and before the **conjunction** unless it obstructs the flow.

   IC, for IC.
   IC, but IC.

   Examples:

   He asked for a promotion, but he got a demotion.

   She had to go to the warehouse, so she left early.

2. Use commas around **removable information**.

   Examples:

   The house, made of wood and cement, was demolished in 1988.

   The company, a turbine manufacturer, has three locations.

   Steve, who has worked for the company for 10 years, has taken his GED test.

3. Use commas to separate **items in a list.** The items can be things (nouns) action phrases.

   Examples:

   He brought nails, screws, tacks, and a hammer.

   They take the order, call the customer, check the order, and ship the merchandise.

©Mercer County Community College

COMMAS

NOTE: The final comma before the **"and"** is **optional**, but it depends on the **context.** If the reader could be confused without the comma, then put it in.

Examples:

He drinks tea, beer and milk.

The afternoon garbage man will drive the truck, make the stops, eat and pick up the garbage.

This being my last will and testament, I am leaving my estate to be divided among my sons: Bill, George and Steve.

4. Use a comma between a **subordinate** clause and a **main** clause. SC, MC.

Examples:

Even though it was 110 degrees, he was wearing a sweater.

Since they lost the key to the room, they had to break down the door.

NOTE: If you put the MC first, you don't need a comma.
MC, SC.

Example:

They had to break down the door since they lost their key.

©Mercer County Community College

COMMAS

5. Use a comma to set of a **direct quote.**

Examples:

He said, "The meeting will be at noon."

They asked, "Where is the meeting being held?"

NOTE: In reported speech, omit the comma.

Examples:

He said the meeting would be at noon.

They asked where the meeting was being held.

6. Use commas between **adjectives** of **equal importance.**

Examples:

She is a wise, witty woman.

The big, expensive, obnoxious American car was parked illegally.

NOTE: use a comma between adjectives when you would say "and"

Example:

The big AND expensive car is parked wrong.

But: The expensive American car (you wouldn't say expensive AND American car)

©Mercer County Community College

COMMAS AND SEMICOLONS

DO NOT use a comma between **two independent clauses.** (IC, IC.). This error is known as a **comma splice,** because you are *splicing* together two ideas that could stand independently.

He was late, he came to work at 9:00.

HOW TO FIX A COMMA SPLICE?

1. Use a **period** to separate the 2 clauses.

   IC. IC.

2. Use a **comma** and a **conjunction** to separate the 2 clauses.

   IC , so IC.
   IC , for IC.
   IC , but IC.

3. Use a **semicolon** to separate the 2 clauses.

   IC ; IC.

4. Use a **semicolon** and a **transition** word (followed by a comma) separate the 2 clauses.

   IC ; however, IC.
   IC ; nevertheless, IC.
   IC ; regardless, IC.

©Mercer County Community College

LONG ITEMS OR CLARIFICATIONS IN A LIST

1. Use **semicolons** between **long** or **wordy items** in a list, and commas between the **adjectives** and **phrases.**

Example:

There were several reasons why she hated going to the warehouse alone: the dark, damp space scared her, the extreme quiet rankled her nerves, made her skin crawl, and left her tense, and her fear of being locked in, a fear that stemmed from her childhood, froze her in her tracks.

There were several reasons why she hated going to the warehouse alone: the dark, damp space scared her; the extreme quiet rankled her nerves, made her skin crawl, and left her tense; and her fear of being locked in, a fear that stemmed from her childhood, froze her in her tracks.

2. Use **commas** between **items** and **clarifications**, then **semicolons** between the **separate items** in a list.

Example:

Many people attended the meeting: Paul Smith, President, Ken Lewis, Vice President, Stan Heim, Marketing Representative, and the secretary.

How many people attended that meeting?

Many people attended the meeting: Paul Smith, President; Ken Lewis, Vice President; Stan Heim, Marketing Representative; and the secretary.

How many people attended this meeting? 82

©Mercer County Community College

COLONS

1. Use **colons** to **introduce a list**. Be sure that you have a **complete** sentence before the colon.

   Example:

   Many different classes are being offered: English, Math, Economics, and Writing.

   But not:

   The classes are: English, Math, Economics, and Writing.

2. Use a **colon** to come to a **conclusion** or **generalization.**

   Example:

   He had no other choice: he had to change shifts.

   The wheels were broken, the radiator was smoking, and the fenders were falling off: her car was a piece of junk.

©Mercer County Community College

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes for Contraction

1. Use an **apostrophe** to replace the **removed letter(s):**

   We are = we're
   can not = can't
   we have eaten = we've eaten

Note: He's could mean **he is** or **he has,** and you need to know the context to determine the tense.

Apostrophes for Possession

1. Use an **apostrophe** and an **S** to show possession:
   Carol's book
   Lorna's pencil
   the student's notebook

2. If the **name/noun ends** in an **S,** you have two options:
   1) add only the apostrophe:
   2) add the apostrophe and the S

   Luis' book or Luis's book
   Jesus' mother or Jesus's mother
   the boss' office or the boss's office

3. If the **noun** is **plural** and you are showing **plural possession**, **add** the S to make the countable noun plural then **add** just the **apostrophe**

   the teacher's book = one teacher and his/her book
   the teachers' lounge = many teachers use the lounge

©Mercer County Community College

APOSTROPHES

4. If the **spelling changes** on the **plural**, **make the change,** then **add** the **apostrophe** after the **S** to show possession:

   the company's policy = one company
   the companies' policy = more than one company

5. If the **plural** is **irregular**, use **apostrophe S** to show possession:

   the women's room
   the children's babysitter

6. If the **plural** and **singular** noun are the **same,** add **apostrophe S**:

   the sheep's barn

7. If you are using the possessive for an **indefinite pronoun**, use **'S.**

anyone's	everyone's	someone's
no one's	somebody's	

©Mercer County Community College

APOSTROPHES

REMEMBER:
Possessive pronouns that replace the noun **do not** take an apostrophe:

yours	not your's
theirs	not their's
ours	not our's
hers	not her's

BE CAREFUL!

It is = it's

its = possession
Example: It's raining so hard that the sheep can't find its barn.

©Mercer County Community College

OTHER PUNCTUATION MARKS

QUESTION MARKS

The question mark (?) follows a direct question.

Do you have the stock we ordered?

Indirect questions tell the reader about a question, rather than ask it directly. They do not require question marks, but end with periods.

He asked if they had the stock they ordered.

EXCLAMATION POINTS

The exclamation point (!) shows that a word or statement expresses excitement or another strong feeling.

Look out for that truck!

Be careful not to use the exclamation point too frequently, as it loses its effectiveness.

HYPHENS

Use hyphens (-) for adjectives joined as one unit to modify a noun.

The company uses the most up-to-date equipment.

Use hyphens with the prefixes **ex** and **self**.

The problem is self-evident.

I saw my ex-boss at a conference last week.

©Mercer County Community College

OTHER PUNCTUATION MARKS

Use hyphens for fractions and numbers above 20 and below 100 when they are spelled out.

> A two-thirds majority is needed to pass the motion.
>
> Seventy-three of our employees received long-service awards.

A hyphen is used to divide a word at the end of a line.

> If you ever visit our plant in the United King-
> dom, please come and see me.

DASHES

Dashes (--) are used for emphasis or to set off parenthetical expressions that already contain commas. Do not add a space before or after a dash.

> CPR sometimes--but not always--succeeds in reviving people who have had heart attacks.

PARENTHESES

Parentheses ( ) are used to set off explanatory information from the rest of the sentence.

> The information that follows (worksheets 2, 3 and 4) will help you to understand the rules of punctuation.

©Mercer County Community College

OTHER PUNCTUATION MARKS

QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks (" ") are needed for direct speech. They enclose the exact words of the speaker or writer.

The supervisor said, "Get to work on time, or your job is on the line!"

Titles of short works, including song titles, short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, book chapters and TV shows, are set off in quotation marks. Longer works should be underlined, or set in italics.

I read an article in Newsweek about training in the workplace. I think it was called "Training for the Twenty-First Century."

©Mercer County Community College

PUNCTUATION EXERCISE

Punctuate the paragraph below.

a new employee is usually assigned the easiest tasks in the office for example she will be expected to learn what tasks are to be performed and who performs them the new employee also learns the companys policies procedures and benefits there are different levels of entry into the company hourly paid salaried and management on her first day the new employee may be asked by the human resources department do you understand the way your contract is set out

©Mercer County Community College

PUNCTUATION EXERCISE

Punctuate the memo below.

To: Customer Service Employees

From: Jane Brown, Supervisor

Date: April 1, 1993

Subject: Letters to Customers

I have become concerned about the correspondence that we are sending out to customers copies of employees memos and letters for the months of January February and March reveal some real problems people are making a variety of punctuation errors commas colons and semicolons are used incorrectly spelling mistakes are common and this shouldnt happen with spell checks and messages are not clear concise or to the point

Even though many of you were at Mercer County Community Colleges last training session Im signing you all up for their new set of mini courses called Grammar Brush Up there are four sessions on offer parts of speech punctuation spelling and sentence problems

Im also purchasing the book Proofreading/Editing Proficiency pay particular attention to Chapter 2 Rules of Good Editing and Chapter 4 Punctuation Made Easy

You must all make a concerted effort to be more accurate do you want your mistakes to affect your relationship with your customers

©Mercer County Community College

PUNCTUATION EXERCISE

Punctuate the letter below.

April 1, 1993

Mrs Lorna Burt
8796 Chipper Avenue
Rhode Hill N.J.08553

Dear Mrs Burt

Thank you for your letter asking about information on our latest product the Automatic Childrens Room Tidier we are pleased that you have seen our commercials on TV weve also advertized regularly in Good Housekeeping and local newspapers

As you requested were sending you the following an order form to be sent to our plant in Edison New Jersey a sample of out product together with a self explanatory evaluation form and a rebate coupon which could be worth nearly two thirds the cost of the product

We know youll love your Automatic Childrens Room Tidier In the words of our many satisfied customers this is XYZs best product ever

Sincerely

Bill Leavitall
Sales Manager

©Mercer County Community College

PUNCTUATION REVIEW

1. During the meeting the manager was shrewd clever and controlled but the order went to the companys competition

2. In spite of the Equal Opportunities Act women still find it difficult to move up in the company let alone become president

3. We thought we would have to work over the Labor Day weekend therefore we were delighted when we finished the order two days before schedule

4. The employees handbook is updated occasionally when there are policy changes when there are holiday changes and at the end of every year.

5. The Christmas bonuses were distributed on December 21 but Bill and Mary two workers in the warehouse complained that they hadnt gotten theirs yet they had a Merry Christmas

6. My new office contains a lot of new furniture a top of the line IBM compatible computer a laser printer a modern streamlined wooden credenza and an environment sensitive halogen lamp

7. The guard at the security house is thorough and reliable he always asks for identification and often requires strangers to show a second form of ID a drivers license a social security card or a recent photo

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 9

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write clear, well constructed letters and memos, at the end of this session, students will be able to:

- simplify complicated sentences
- remove cliches, redundancies and obsolete expressions

TOPICS:

- basic rules for editing:
  trimming unnecessary words,
  simplifying language, removing cliches,
  redundancies, and obsolete expressions

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- worksheets of examples
- application of the above to own first drafts

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 9

EVALUATION:

- comparison of first to second drafts
- successful completion of worksheets

Students will be able to edit their own work so that their messages are clear, concise and coherent. If they write well, their ideas are more likely to be taken seriously by their peers, supervisors and managers.

MATERIALS:

- Editing: What to look for
- Simplifying Prepositional Phrases
- Simplifying Phrases
- Sentences to Simplify
- Outdated Business Language
- Redundancies
- Being Tactful and Positive
- Eliminating Redundancies

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 9

- The purpose of the following sessions is for students to edit their five memos that they have been working on throughout the course. These will be submitted in session #14.

- Students are introduced to the rules of editing, using company and class generated materials. The handouts are for back-up and for the students to use later.

- The handouts are supplemented by worksheets to edit.

- Then students look at their own writing. Encourage them to be critical of their first drafts and to edit ruthlessly. This is a good time for the instructor to spend time with individual students and their specific writing problems.

©Mercer County Community College

EDITING: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Lengthy Sentences

In arranging for the customer to finance his car, Chrysler dealers were at a disadvantage when competing with General Motors and Ford dealers because both these companies offered direct auto financing to dealers and customers through their own financing sources and Chrysler dealers had to look to outside sources to satisfy their financing requirements.

Clichés

Enclosed please find the information as per your request. Hopefully, you can utilize our product to benefit your company within the parameters of your computer's invoice processing. We appreciate your input.

Too Many Big Words

Pursuant to our discussion, herewith we acknowledge receipt of your correspondence as of the above date.

Subsequently, we'll require your endorsement.

Vague Expressions

The company's negative cash flow position forced it to resize its operations to the level of profitable market opportunities.

Active vs. Passive Voice

It was necessary to terminate the search

The secretary was hired by Mary.

The Ford corporation was founded by Henry Ford in 1903

New and used automobiles are financed by G.M.A.C.

©Mercer County Community College

SIMPLIFYING PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

ORIGINAL	REVISED
at all times	always
at a later date	later
at an early date	soon
at the present time	now
at the time when	when
at this time	now
in the amount of $10.00	for $10.00
in the development of	in developing
in the event that	if
in the meantime	meanwhile
in the nature of	like
in the near future	soon
in view of the fact that	because
for the collection of	to collect
for making the comparisons	to compare
for the learning of	to learn
for the mastery of	to master
for the month of July	for July
for the operation of	to operate
for the purchasing of	to buy
for the preparation of	to prepare
for the purpose of reviewing	to review
for the operation of	to operate
for the reason that	because
for this to be accomplished	to do this
along the lines of	like
of this nature	like this
on the grounds that	because
on the part of	by
over the signature of	signed by
to the attainment of	to get
through the use of	by using
under the direction of	directed by
under separate cover	separately

©Mercer County Community College

SIMPLIFYING PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

UNNECESSARY WORDS

are as follows	are
aware of the fact that	aware of
if it is deemed to be satisfactory	if satisfactory
in order to be well-prepared	to be well-prepared
in the course of his speech	in his speech
in the month of July	in July
in the year 1993	in 1993
it is interesting	(leave it out)
it is obvious that	(leave it out)
it is possible to do this	we can do this
until such time as	until
we are in the process of preparing	we are preparing
we are in the process of restructuring	we are restructuring
we wish to advise	(leave it out)
we find it objectionable	we object
we came to the conclusion that	we concluded that

©Mercer County Community College

SIMPLIFYING PHRASES

Simplify the phrases below. Eliminate any wordiness, jargon, obsolete expressions or incorrectly used words.

at this point in time	_____
as per your suggestion	_____
I would like to call your attention	_____
in the event of	_____
due to the fact that	_____
at a later date	_____
kindly advise	_____
in the normal course of our procedures	_____
this will acknowledge with thanks	_____
in accordance with your request	_____
under separate cover	_____
on a daily basis	_____
each and every one	_____
in my opinion, I think	_____
irregardless	_____
owing to the fact that	_____
we regret to inform you	_____
therefore, we ask you to remit	_____
there is no doubt but that	_____
so very happy	_____
clenched tightly	_____
close proximity	_____
close scrutiny	_____
in the majority of instances	_____
at this juncture of maturation	_____
in the amount of	_____

©Mercer County Community College

SENTENCES TO SIMPLIFY

Rewrite the following sentences so that they are simpler and more concise.

1. Pursuant to our meeting last week, the undersigned requests the opinion of your workteam concerning the feasibility of the proposed guidelines.

2. In the event of an unexpected accident and you are a witness who saw the accident, you should file a completed accident report with the office of the safety director.

3. They would not divulge the reason that their equipment was in a non-operative condition.

4. We must interface with the Personnel Department as to the availability of the training facility in order to assemble for our Working Class.

5. Enclosed you will find various selections from literature about Continuous Improvement to assist assemblers in increasing their productivity.

©Mercer County Community College

OUTDATED BUSINESS LANGUAGE

Good business writing requires flexibility and a willingness to change. Many obsolete phrases and overused expressions are no longer appropriate and make your writing dull and expressionless.

Examples:

comply with your request
permit us to remind you
pleasure of a reply
regret to advise you
thanking you kindly
we take pleasure in advising
subsequent to your letter of
as per our agreement
as per your request
enclosed please find
under separate cover
until such time
prior to the start of
regarding the matter of
in the near future
pursuant to
hereby advise
please be advised
in the matter that
please remit

©Mercer County Community College

REDUNDANCIES

Redundancies are unnecessary repetitions of words. Writing should be concise and to the point.

Examples:

exact same
past history
past experience
free gift
personal opinion
true fact
other alternative
return back
basic fundamental
both alike
cooperate together
revert back
Jewish rabbi
Catholic priest
meet together

goals and objectives
fair and just
advised and informed
rules and regulations
full and complete
prompt and immediate
each and every
right and proper
continuous and uninterrupted
refuse and decline
modern and up-to-date

Avoid these phrases:

As a general rule
In my opinion, I believe that
In my personal opinion
Enclosed you will find

©Mercer County Community College

BEING TACTFUL AND POSITIVE

Be sensitive to your audience's viewpoint. Avoid tactless expressions.

Examples:

I don't agree with you
Surely you realize
You claim that; you complain that; you neglect
Your claim; your complaint; your neglect
You forgot
We are unable to grant
We must insist
Everybody knows

Use positive words.

Examples:

able	dependable	important	please
absolutely	direct	improve	pleasure
benefit	encourage	immediately	popular
capable	enthusiasm	kind	prompt
certain	grateful	often	pertinent
clear	happy	optimistic	willing

©Mercer County Community College

ELIMINATING REDUNDANCIES

Rewrite the sentences below, eliminating the unnecessary words.

1. In my opinion, I personally like working on a J.I.T. line.

2. Joint cooperation is absolutely essential for the mutual benefit of everyone.

3. The working environment at the company is very unique in the Trenton area.

4. Before I understood how continuous flow worked, I was somewhat critical of J.I.T., but now I think it is totally excellent.

5. At the present moment, use of schedules is restricted just to Insight 2.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 10

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write clear, well constructed letters and memos, at the end of this session, students will be able to:

- use the active rather than the passive voice
- correct sentence problems, e.g. subject and verb agreement and parallel construction
- use proofreading techniques to edit a first draft

TOPICS:

- active and passive voice
- subject and verb agreement
- parallel construction
- proofreading

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- worksheets of examples
- application of the above to own first drafts

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 10

EVALUATION:

- comparison of first to second drafts
- successful completion of worksheets

Students will be able to edit their own work so that their messages are clear, concise and coherent. If they write well, their ideas are more likely to be taken seriously by their peers, supervisors and managers.

MATERIALS:

- Making Passive Sentences Active
- More Sentences to Edit
- Subject-Verb Agreement
- Parallel Construction

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 10

- The purpose of this session is for students to continue learning and applying the rules of editing. They continue to edit their five memos that they have been working on throughout the course. These will be submitted in session #14.

- For half the session students work with handouts and class and company generated materials. The handouts are for back-up and for the students to use later.

- Then students look at their own writing. Encourage them to be critical of their first drafts and to edit ruthlessly. This is a good time for the instructor to spend time with individual students and their specific writing problems.

©Mercer County Community College

MAKING PASSIVE SENTENCES ACTIVE

Overusing the passive voice makes you sound ineffectual, and unwilling to take a stand. Instead, use the active voice to sound more positive and capable of getting the job done.

Example:
We have received your letter *or* Thank you for your letter
rather than
Receipt of your letter is acknowledged

Rewrite the sentences below using the active voice.

1. The supervisor was notified by the employees that the meeting would take place the following Thursday.

2. Suggestions and comments about my ideas can be given without hurting my feelings.

3. It was stated in the nurse's report that fewer accidents were suffered by employees this year than in the previous three years.

4. It is advised that accurate minutes of all departmental meetings be kept and reports submitted by departments at the end of every month.

©Mercer County Community College

MORE SENTENCES TO EDIT

Edit the sentences below. Make passive sentences active and get rid of any unnecessary words that make the meaning less clear and to the point.

1. After the order form was checked, the box containing the necessary and required materials with which to fill the particular order was organized and packed by the employee.

2. We have been handed out notebooks and we have been given writing utensils by the MCCC teacher, and many notes have been taken in the MCCC writing class that is held in the company.

3. Firstly, the truck will be driven by the individual in charge of cargo motion management, namely Steve, and the units will at that point in time be relocated to a new location by that same individual employee.

©Mercer County Community College

MORE SENTENCES TO EDIT

4. By the time she left the department, the envelopes had been decollated and the materials had been replaced back into their respective and individual locations by her, because she had been instructed to do so.

5. The holidays are a good time when parties are thrown, cookies are baked, and much good cheer is spread and a good time is had by all, especially in a small company where personal connections are easily established and maintained.

6. The application must be filled out and the resume must be attached with a staple to the aforementioned document in order that you be considered for the position which is trying to be filled before the beginning of the new year, 1993.

©Mercer County Community College

SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT

Subject - verb agreement problems stem from having one of them **plural** and the other **singular,** so they don't match.

INCORRECT	Some people *has* a lot of money.
CORRECT	Some people *have* a lot of money.

INCORRECT	A person should do *their* own work.
CORRECT	A person should do *his or her* own work.

INCORRECT	The supervisors *was* disappointed with the outcome.
CORRECT	The supervisors *were* disappointed with the outcome.

Sometimes, agreement errors are not so obvious.

INCORRECT	The board of directors control the company, so *they* have the final decision about policy changes.
CORRECT	The board of directors controls the company, so *it* has the final decision about policy changes.

INCORRECT	An analysis of the problems *make* me conclude that we have a lot of work to do.
CORRECT	An analysis of the problems *makes* me conclude that we have a lot of work to do.

Some **compound subjects** name a unit that calls for a **singular** verb.

INCORRECT	Bacon and eggs *are* my favorite breakfast.
CORRECT	Bacon and eggs *is* my favorite breakfast.

but

INCORRECT	Her loyalty and her ability *makes* her a valuable employee.
CORRECT	Her loyalty and her ability *make* her a valuable employee.

©Mercer County Community College

SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT

With **either .....or,** and **neither .....nor**, when **both** elements are **singular**, the **verb** is **singular.** When **one** subject is **singular** and the **other plural**, the **verb** agrees with the **nearer subject**.

INCORRECT	Neither the early nor the late appointment *are* good for me.
CORRECT	Neither the early nor the late appointment *is* good for me.
INCORRECT	Neither the ideas nor the style *are* satisfactory.
CORRECT	Neither the ideas nor the style *is* satisfactory.
INCORRECT	Neither the style nor the ideas *is* satisfactory.
CORRECT	Neither the style nor the ideas *are* satisfactory.

The **verb** must agree with the **subject** in number, even when there are modifiers of a different number.
(Modifiers are words or groups of words that describe, limit or make more exact the meaning of other words)

INCORRECT	The final report, including the graphs and reference sections *are* being published this week.
CORRECT	The final report, including the graphs and reference sections, *is* being published this week.

©Mercer County Community College

SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT

A) Make the verbs in the following sentences agree with their subjects.

1. The new supervisor (*seem, seems*) pleased with our work.

2. Each of the customers (*is, are*) anxious to see our new product.

3. A new consignment of computers *(is, are)* expected to arrive today.

4. All the members of the department (*joins, join*) me in wishing you a speedy recovery.

5. The Human Resources Manager, as well as all her department, (*has, have*) decided to implement the new procedure.

6. Either the secretaries or Bill Smith (*answer, answers*) the phones during the lunch hour.

7. There (*has, have)* been times when some people were unable to go to class.

8. The purpose of these classes *(is, are*) to help improve our skills in writing.

©Mercer County Community College

SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT

B) Identify whether the subjects below are singular or plural. Then complete the sentences using the verbs in parentheses. Make sure that the subjects and verbs agree.

1. Going to classes (consist of) _____

_____

_____

2. None of my supervisor's colleagues (know) _____

_____

_____

3. Jose is the type of person who (get) _____

_____

_____

4. Doing my work in advance and having a longer coffee break (make)_____

_____

5. The memos we get from the Human Resources Department always (involve) _____

_____

©Mercer County Community College

PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION

To be grammatically parallel, nouns should align with nouns, verbs with verbs and phrases with phrases.

INCORRECT: *Working* with others is sometimes harder than *to work* by yourself.
CORRECT: *Working* with others is sometimes harder than *working* by yourself.

INCORRECT: My supervisor is a woman of *understanding, compassion* and *who knows how to be fair.*
CORRECT: My supervisor is a woman of *understanding, compassion* and *fairness.*

INCORRECT: The training room was *painted, had new carpeting put in* and *cleaned* for the new classes.
CORRECT: The training room was *painted, carpeted* and *cleaned* for the new classes.

INCORRECT: *To record, to write up* and *distributing* minutes are all tasks of the team secretary.
CORRECT: *To record, to write up* and *to distribute* minutes are all tasks of the team secretary.
OR: *Recording, writing* and *distributing* minutes are all tasks of the team secretary.

also

INCORRECT: It has and continues to *be* important.
CORRECT: It has *been* and continues to *be* important.

INCORRECT: You can teach a dog *to listen* but not *talk.*
CORRECT: You can teach a dog *to listen* but not *to talk.*

©Mercer County Community College

EXERCISES USING PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION

Revise the following sentences so that they are grammatically parallel.

1. Making mistakes costs money, wastes time and customers take their business elsewhere.

2. Over the holidays, our department likes to go out for lunch, sending cards and baking cookies.

3. It was a very long meeting but very productive.

4. Our company is profitable, competitive and it is a stimulating place to work in.

5. You can program a computer to give forecasts but not think for itself.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 11

OBJECTIVES:

In order to write clear, well constructed letters and memos, at the end of this session, students will be able to:

- recognize and correct misplaced, dangling and wrongly used verbal modifiers
- correct split infinitives
- use pronouns correctly
- recognize and correct ambiguities in their writing

TOPICS:

- misplaced modifiers
- dangling modifiers
- verbal modifiers
- split infinitives
- pronouns
- ambiguities

METHODS:

- guided discussion of principles
- worksheets of examples
- application of the above to own first drafts

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 11

EVALUATION:

- comparison of first to second drafts
- successful completion of worksheets

Students will be able to edit their own work so that their messages are clear, concise and coherent. If they write well, their ideas are more likely to be taken seriously by their peers, supervisors and managers.

MATERIALS:

- worksheets on modifiers
- worksheets on pronouns
- agreement of pronouns and antecedents
- avoiding ambiguity

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 11

- As with the previous sessions, the purpose of this session is for students to edit their five memos that they have been working on throughout the course. These will be submitted in session #14.

- During the first half of the session students will become more familiar with the rules of editing, using company and class generated materials. The handouts are for back-up and for the students to use later.

- The handouts are supplemented by worksheets to edit.

- Then students look at their own writing. Encourage them to be critical of their first drafts and to edit ruthlessly. This is a good time for the instructor to spend time with individual students and their specific writing problems.

©Mercer County Community College

DANGLING MODIFIERS

Modifiers are words or phrases that give more information about the subject, verb or object in a clause. A modifier **dangles** when the word it modifies is not actually in the sentence.

1. Confirming our conversation, the meeting will be next Tuesday morning.

2. At the age of five, I began teaching my daughter to read.

3. Signs advertising the new exhibition are seen, driving towards Philadelphia.

4. Standing in the same spot for two hours, the assembler's foot fell asleep.

5. Unless completely rewired, nobody should handle the faulty equipment.

©Mercer County Community College

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

A **misplaced modifier** seems to modify another part of the sentence than the writer intended.

1. We need to have a meeting to discuss the new recommendations that will be put into practice by March 9.

2. He bought the unit from the warehouse that was made of lightweight aluminum.

3. Everyone, except assemblers and secretaries with less than two years experience, is eligible for the training.

4. I grabbed the fire extinguisher and put out the blaze running down the aisle.

5. Sitting on the top shelf, he saw the missing package of instructions.

©Mercer County Community College

VERBAL MODIFIERS

When **verbal nouns** (gerunds - ending in **-ing**) are modified by another noun or pronoun, the modifying noun or pronoun must be in the **possessive** case.

INCORRECT: We appreciate **you** making this effort

CORRECT: We appreciate **your** making this effort.

INCORRECT: It was **Mike** saving carefully, that allowed them to buy the house.

CORRECT: It was **Mike's** saving carefully, that allowed them to buy the house.

©Mercer County Community College

SPLIT INFINITIVES

Split infinitives occur when at least one word is placed between **to** and the verb.

INCORRECT: We were told **to not go** to the meeting yesterday.

CORRECT: We were told **not to go** to the meeting yesterday.

INCORRECT: "**To boldly go** where no one has been before."

CORRECT: "**To go boldly** where no one has been before."

©Mercer County Community College

PRONOUNS

A pronoun replaces a noun and makes sentences easier to read:

Without pronouns:
Frank took Frank's car out of Franks garage and then Frank took Frank's car to the mechanic.

With pronouns:
Frank took his car out of his garage and then he took it to the mechanic.

Subject Pronouns

I	we
you	you (plural)
he, she, it	they

Object Pronouns

me	us
you	you (plural)
him, her, it	them

Personal Pronouns (to show **possession**)

my/mine	our/ours
your/yours	your/yours
his, her/hers, its	their/theirs

Note: personal pronouns that replace the noun completely do not take an apostrophe before the s.

That is your car → That is yours (not your's)

©Mercer County Community College

PRONOUNS

Indefinite Pronouns

anyone	everyone	someone	no one
everybody	somebody	nobody	everything
something	nothing	neither	either

Note: indefinite pronouns are always singular

Neither George nor Anna **has** a stamp
Everyone **has** time to eat lunch
Someone **is** making fresh coffee

Pronoun Agreement

When you use an indefinite pronoun, make sure the possessive pronoun matches.

1. Everyone has a right to speak _____ mind.
   (their/his, her)

2. Somebody left _____ car in my parking place.
   (their/his, her)

Sometimes the sentence can get really messy with too many his/hers. In that case, make the singular noun plural and change the rest accordingly.

Awkward:
Every employee should have his/her photo taken for his/her ID card so that he/she has access to his/her entrance area.

Better:
Employees should have photos taken for their ID cards so that they can have access to their entrance areas.

©Mercer County Community College

AMBIGUOUS PRONOUNS

WHICH: takes the place of an idea or action, but is singular

He broke the stapler, used all the tape, and lost the hole punch, which really annoyed me.

What annoyed you? The first? The second? The last? Or all three? Be clear! Think of ways to write this so that your meaning is not ambiguous.

THIS: takes the place of an idea or action, but is singular

My air gun isn't working and the line is down. This is a problem.

What is a problem? Rewrite the sentence to get rid of the ambiguous **this.**

Sometimes we can put in a noun after **this** to clarify:

The radio is loud and people are screaming. This is annoying! (weak)
The radio is loud and people are screaming. This **noise** is annoying! (better)

Sometimes a sentence has two subjects or objects, so that the pronoun is unclear.

Example 1:

Bill asked Ted if he could go to the ball game, but he said no, so he didn't go.

©Mercer County Community College

AMBIGUOUS PRONOUNS

Because there are two male subjects and the pronoun **HE**, the reference is unclear. Who wanted to go to the game? Who didn't go? One way to clear up this problem is by using direct speech with quotation marks:

> Bill asked Ted, "Can you go to the ball game?" Ted said he couldn't, so Bill didn't go either.

Example 2:

> After Steve picked up the garbage and took out his lunch, he ate it.

The **IT** is unclear! What did he eat? To clarify the idea:

> Steve ate his lunch after he took it out and picked up the garbage.

©Mercer County Community College

AVOIDING AMBIGUITY

Rewrite the sentences below, so that they are no longer ambiguous.

1. Maintenance doesn't have the parts in stock to fix the Halo Box. This must be taken care of immediately.

2. After the pressure valve was removed from the unit, it was inspected immediately.

3. Assemblers and welders with less than two years experience are not eligible for the program.

4. Joe asked Ron if he could go to the meeting at M.C.C.C. next week, but he said he couldn't.

5. Send him a memo listing everything he must discuss at his team meeting by November 5.

6. No one took time to complete their time cards, so they weren't sent to personnel.

7. When I saw Sarah standing next to Joan, I asked her if she had met her before.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 12

OBJECTIVES:

In order to edit their own work. at the end of this session students will have had extensive practice applying all the principles of editing that have been covered over the preceding weeks.

TOPICS:

- memos to edit

METHODS:

- worksheets
- application of the above to own first drafts

EVALUATION:

- competent rewriting of memos
- comparison of first to final drafts

Students will be able to edit their own work and the work of others so that the messages are clear, concise and coherent. If they write well, they will feel confident about putting their ideas down in writing and these ideas are more likely to be taken seriously by their peers, supervisors and managers.

MATERIALS:

- Memos for Revision

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 12

- The purpose of this session is to put into practice all the rules of editing, covered in the previous sessions.

- Students rewrite memos following class discussion about what is wrong with them. Encourage students to discuss ideas among themselves, with as little imput from the instructor as possible.

- Then students look at their own writing. Encourage them to be critical of their first drafts and to edit ruthlessly. This is a good time for the instructor to spend time with individual students and their specific writing problems.

©Mercer County Community College

MEMO FOR REVISION

TO: All Fellow Employees
FROM: John Brown, General Manager
DATE: December 15, 1992

SUBJECT: A Holiday Message

I was reflecting on how much has changed for the Brown family this year. Moving from Ohio. Getting settled in the New Jersey area. And best of all, getting to meet all of you.

Just as there have been a lot of changes in the Brown family, you have experienced lots of changes here too. A full year of our customers being served with a passion. We have done well. And we can all be proud of our accomplishments this year!

Like all successful companies made up of individuals committed to each other, the commitment includes believing in a common goal. And making this place a little better everyday. Many thanks to each of you for your continuing efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

I trust the Holiday Season will bring you and your family Happiness, Joy and Peace. I look forward to us having even more fun in 1993.

Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year!

John.

©Mercer County Community College

MEMO FOR REVISION

TO: Mary Smith
FROM: Fred Jones
DATE: October 15, 1992

SUBJECT: M.C.C.C. Grant

Pursuant to our telephone conversation of October 1, the decision we made then to assign Lorna Burt to work at the company has been implemented by me and she has been informed of this.

There is a possibility that course binders do not exist there in sufficient quantity for all the participants who will be attending the courses. It is imperative that these be purchased ahead of the commencement of the courses. If this cannot be done by you, please see me so that we can make acquisition of appropriate quantities.

In order to prepare for the enormity of work involved in the organization of the next 18 months, a memo must be sent to all individuals in your section explicitly delineating their responsibilities. This should be done by you at your earliest possible convenience.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 13 & 14

OBJECTIVES:

During these sessions, students will work on their final drafts of their memos and letters, to be submitted by the end of Session #14. Students will apply all the principles of editing covered over the preceding weeks.

TOPICS:

- memos and letters

METHODS:

- individual writing
- one-on-one work with students

EVALUATION:

- Teacher evaluation and imput into students' writing

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 13 & 14

- Students will submit their portfolios of 5 memos and letters at the end of Session #14. The instructor must then spend time marking and giving detailed constructive criticism, so that the portfolios can be returned to the students at the beginning of Session #16.

- During these sessions the instructor will spend time with each student, offering advice, evaluating what he/she has done so far, and focusing on individual problems. This is an extremely important element of the course as not all writing problems will have been covered and it is up to the instructor to identify and be sensitive to individual needs.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 15

OBJECTIVES:

In order to respond to a customer complaint, at the end of this session students will be able to work as a team to:

- identify a problem
- devise strategies for dealing with the problem
- write a clear, well constructed letter to solve the problem

TOPICS:

- identifying a problem
- team building
- writing to solve a problem

METHODS:

- group discussion
- teamwork
- writing

EVALUATION:

- assessment of memos and whether they achieve what they set out to do.

Students will be able to focus directly on a problem and respond clearly and efficiently in writing. The strategies learned can be applied directly to problem solving on the line.

MATERIALS:

- Writing to Solve a Problem
- Weserveyou Airlines

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 15

- This session gives the instructor time to be assessing the students' portfolios to be returned in Session #16. At the same time new concepts are being covered and once again the class is working as a team after several sessions of individual work.

- Class discussion on what is wrong with the letter "Weserveyou Airlines". Does it solve the problem?
  In groups, let them rewrite it.

- Using the handout **Writing to Solve a Problem,** students write their own letters, solving a problem. This can be one generated by the teacher or from their own experiences.

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

1. **Identify** the problem - *What?*

2. **Describe** the problem - *Who* is involved? *Where? When?*

3. **Effects** of the problem? - *How does it affect us?* Specifically?

4. **Causes** of the problem? - *What? Who? Why?*

5. **Solution** to the problem - *How to eradicate the problem.*

6. **Implementation** of the solution - *How to make the solution work.*

©Mercer County Community College

WESERVEYOU AIRLINES

January 15, 1993

Mr. John Smith
19 Montgomery Road
Trenton, NJ 08690

Dear Mr. Smith:
I was asked to investigate the circumstances that prompted your recent letter and respond directly to you. I apologize that your special meals continue to be a source of irritation and you are simply not receiving them as requested.

In checking your recent past date record, it appears that special meals were ordered for flights 123 and 456, but not on flight 654 as your documentation states. I believe that this problem is occurring between the transmission of the information your travel agent is putting into the computer and what we are receiving. It does not seem to be any body's fault, but simply a computer glitch. However, I realize how frustrating and inconvenient this must be for you. I would be more than happy to speak with your travel agent regarding this issue so that he and I can come up with a solution to your problem. Please feel free to have her call me so we can figure this out together.

Mr. Smith, again, I apologize that you are having such a difficult time. This is not something that you should have to worry about and I am more than happy to solve the problem. Thank you for the opportunity to be of assistance. We, at WESERVEYOU AIRLINES, are here to serve you.

Yours truly,

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 16

OBJECTIVES:

In order to complete this course, at the end of this session students will be able to:

- write clear, well constructed letters and memos

TOPICS:

- students' final drafts
- teacher feedback on students' letters and memos
- post-class exercise
- course evaluations

METHODS:

- group discussion
- individual teacher/student conferences
- post-class exercise

©Mercer County Community College

WRITING 1 ◆ SESSION 16

EVALUATION:

- teacher evaluation of coursework memos
- students' evaluation of course
- teacher evaluation of pre and post class exercises

Students will be more effective communicators. This will make them more efficient at their jobs and more willing to take responsibility for mistakes made through miscommunication.

MATERIALS:

- Students' portfolios
- post-class exercise
- course evaluations

©Mercer County Community College

TEACHER TIPS ◆ SESSION 16

- Return students' portfolios, giving detailed feedback. Spend time conferencing with students individually while the others are working on post-class exercises and evaluations.

- Post-class exercises and course evaluations

©Mercer County Community College